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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted of counseling services in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in Maryland (1) to gather information on the current status of counseling services provided to ABE students in the state; (2) to assess the need for future counseling services for these students; and (3) to design a model for a three-year counseling implementation and staff development plan for use in ABE programs in the state. Data were gathered through literature reviews; perusal of reports from the Adult and Community Education Branch of the Maryland State Department of Education; and interviews with and survey questionnaires filled out by local ABE program coordinators, teachers, counselors, and students. It was found that some of the ABE programs in Maryland are providing some counseling services in varying degrees; however, no program is providing all needed services and some programs provide few or none. Based on the findings, it was recommended that local ABE programs begin to build a program of counseling services that would address the needs of students as they enter, participate in, and leave the program. The recommendations include minimal standards for delivery of these services. Services should include (1) entry services introduction to the program, registration and orientation, initial assessment of skills, academic program planning, self-appraisal, goal setting, and establishment of group support systems; (2) participation and retention services monitoring student progress, academic planning, career development and planning, assistance with personal concerns, and maintenance of group support systems; and (3) exit services reaching dropouts, follow up of completers, referral to appropriate community agencies, and staff development. A model comprising a three-year plan of goals for counseling services in Maryland ABE programs was proposed. (KC)

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COUNSELING SERVICES FOR ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN MARYLAND

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A Report Prepared for the
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION	Page
Title Page	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
List of Appendices	vi
List of Tables	vii
I. Introduction	1
A. Project Goals and Strategies	1
B. Report Format	2
II. Background of Counseling Services for Adult Learners	3
A. Background Information	3
B. Models of Counseling Service	5
C. Summary and Suggested Model of Counseling Services	9
III. Procedures of this Study	11
A. Background Information	11
B. [illegible]te Visits and Interviews	12
C. Sur[illegible] Forms	16
D. Surve[illegible] Distribution and Returns	18
IV. Findings	21
A. Overview	21
B. Phase I: Program Entrance Services	22
1. Introduction to the Program	22
2. Registration and Orientation	24
3. Initial Assessment of Skills	25
4. Academic Program Planning, Including Self-Appraisal and Goal Setting	27
5. Establishment of Group Support Systems	28

SECTION	Page
C. Phase II: Participation and Retention Services	31
1. Monitoring Student Progress	31
2. Academic Planning	32
3. Career Development and Planning	33
4. Assistance with Personal Concerns	37
5. Maintenance of Group Support Systems	39
D. Phase III: Exit Services	39
1. Reaching "Drop-Outs"	40
2. Follow-Up of "Graduates"	40
3. Referral to Appropriate Community Agencies	41
E. Staff and Staff Development	43
1. Counselors	43
2. Teachers	45
3. Paraprofessionals, Volunteers and Peer Counselors	47
F. In-Service Needs and Interests	49
1. Teachers	49
2. Counselors	50
3. Program Coordinators	50
4. Other Personnel	51
G. Summary of Findings	51
V. Conclusions and Recommendations	53
A. Overview	53
B. A Model Program of ABE Counseling Services	53
1. Phase I: Program Entrance Services	54
A. Introduction to the Program	54
B. Registration and Orientation	54
C. Initial Assessment of Skills	55
D. Academic Program Planning, Including Self-Appriasal and Goal Setting	56
E. Establishment of Group Support Systems	57
2. Phase II: Participation and Retention Services	58
A. Monitoring Student Progress	58
B. Academic Planning	58
C. Career Development and Planning	59
D. Assistance with Personal Concerns	60
E. Maintenance of Group Support Systems	61

SECTION	Page
3. Phase III: Exit Services	62
A. Reaching "Drop Outs"	62
B. Follow-Up of "Graduates"	63
C. Referral to Appropriate Community Agencies	63
D. Staff and Staff Development	64
1. Teachers	64
2. Counselors	65
3. Peer Counselors	66
4. Volunteers	66
5. ABE Coordinators	67
E. The Next Three Years	67
VI. Appendices	70

APPENDICES

Title	Page
A. Initial Contact Letter	A 1
B. A.B.E. Counseling Information Survey Form	B 1-3
C. Surveys Distributed to: Students,	C 1-2
Teachers,	C 3-7
Counselors/Recruiters/Advisers	C 8-11
D. Tables of Student Survey Responses,	D 1-2, 10-11
Teacher Responses	D 3-6
Counselor/Recruiter/Adviser Responses	D 7-9

List of Tables

Title	Page
1. Distribution of Surveys by Region	18
2. Distribution of Survey Returns by Region and State	20
3. Where Students Get Help	D-1
4. What Students Want Help With	D-2
5. Per Cent of Students Whom Teachers Help	D-3
6. Per Cent of Teachers Interested in Learning More About These Counseling Strategies	D-4
7. Per Cent of Teachers Who Believe Counselors Offer These Services	D-5
8. Per Cent of Teachers Who Would Like Counselor to Provide Services	D-6
9. Per Cent of Students Whom Counselors/Recruiters/Advisers Help With Problems	D-7
10. Per Cent of Counselors/Recruiters/Advisers Engaged in Specific Counseling Activities	D-8
11. Per Cent of Counselors Interested in Learning More About These Counseling Strategies	D-9
12. Where Students in Correctional Institutions Get Help	D-10
13. What Students in Correctional Institutions Want Help With	D-11

I. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings and recommendations of a study of counseling services in Adult Basic Education Programs in Maryland which was sponsored by the Adult and Community Education Branch of the Maryland State Department of Education as part of an Adult Education Special Project Grant for 1980-81. The project, which was titled Counseling Services for Adult Basic Education Programs in Maryland, had the following goals:

I. To gather information on the current status of counseling services provided to Adult Basic Education (ABE) students in Maryland.

II. To assess the need for future counseling services for these students.

III. To design a model for a 3-year counseling implementation and staff development plan for use in ABE programs in Maryland.

To accomplish these goals the following strategies were implemented during the course of project.

A. A review of previous research related to the provision of counseling services for the adult learner was conducted.

B. Pertinent documents, reports and materials obtained from the Adult and Community Education Branch of the MSDE were reviewed.

C. Personal interviews were conducted with the coordinators of the local ABE programs; teachers; counselors/recruiters/advisers; and students; and also personnel at several Multi-Service Community Centers.

D. Survey questionnaires were used to collect additional information on current counseling practices and to identify needs for future program and staff development.

E. Findings of the study were presented to members of Adult and Community Education Branch to aid in developing the final recommendations of the project report.

The outcomes of these procedures is presented in this report in four sections. The first section gives an overview and background information on services for adult learners. In the second section details of the procedures followed in this study are provided. The third section outlines the current "state of the art" of counseling practices in Adult Basic Education programs in Maryland. Highlighted in this and other sections are "existing exemplary practices" which are presented to serve as bench marks for future program planning and also as possible minimal standards for counseling services. The final section of the report outlines recommendations for program and staff development to upgrade counseling services in ABE programs in Maryland for the next three years.

II. BACKGROUND OF COUNSELING SERVICES FOR ADULT LEARNERS

A. Background Information

Traditionally, counseling services have been most closely connected in our society with secondary education. Today, almost all adults in our society who attended high school had some contact with a "guidance counselor." This well established pattern goes back as far as 1907 and the establishment of the first school guidance program.[1] Of more recent origins, have been the extension of counseling services upward for college students[2] and downward for elementary age students.[3] Thus, the pattern of providing some form of counseling for students in our society from kindergarten through college has been well established for a long time.

Less well developed, and of more recent origin, however, has been the establishment of counseling services for the "adult student." This euphemism has been coined to cover a truly heterogeneous population encompassing: adults with high school, college and graduate degrees returning to school for more training; retired persons and senior citizens seeking enrichment; women returning to school (at all levels of education) after years as homemakers; and finally, the adult basic education student who lacks minimal competence in basic skills. In assessing current prac-

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[1] C. H. Miller, Foundations of Guidance, Harper Row, 1971.

[2] T. Harvey, Future directions for student personnel, Journal of College Student Personnel, 1974, 15, 248-256.

[3] D. Dinkmeyer, Elementary school counseling, Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1973, 52, 171-174.

tices in counseling adult students it is evident that a clear distinction has not always been made between adults who have completed secondary and post-secondary education and the ABE student. While both groups have some needs in common it is clear that the adult with minimal skills has some very special needs. In an earlier study sponsored by the Maryland State Department of Education,[1] some of these needs were identified. According to this study, the ABE students' prominent concerns were: time pressure and management; unrealistic goal-setting; family resistance to school attendence; limited contact with faculty, students and administration; and the inability to "negotiate the system." In addition, because of poor basic skills, ABE students often come from low socio-economic groups, which in itself can breed feelings of helplessness, deprivation, insecurity and a sense of limited alternatives. The study goes on to describe techniques which are appropriate for conducting individual counseling sessions with this population. However, this earlier study did not address the question of counseling programs for ABE students.

A more recent discussion of the ABE student and counseling, suggests that there is a strong need for providing support in what can be a threatening and demoralizing situation.[2] Recognizing that ABE students lack confidence in themselves as learners and often have a "negative based" memory of education the author stresses the orientation of students to the ABE program as the critical event. (The present study lends support to this

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[1] L. Gump and H. Stern Counseling Adults in Continuing Education, Maryland State Department of Education, 1973.

[2] P. A. Caldwell, Innovations in adult counseling, Adult Literacy and Basic Education, Spring 1978. 126-131.

view and addresses this issue in greater detail in the findings and recommendation sections.) From the beginning, ABE students need:

(1) To understand the mechanics of the program.

(2) To set realistic goals for themselves.

(3) To learn what resources are available to them.

(4) To deal with their fears of education, past and present.

(5) And to experience a feeling of group support for their current academic undertaking.

Given the unique needs of ABE students, what are the appropriate counseling services which should be provided in order to enable them to meet their goals? The answer to this question is not readily available.

In an effort to answer this we will summarize various program models (some of which we found exist only on paper) and others which are in operation. Then we will attempt to apply some of these practices to the unique aspects of ABE programs in Maryland.

The difficulty of this task is further compounded by the fact that most "professional" guidelines talk about the "role and function" of counselors per se, and do not address the issue of counseling programs. Because of today's economic climate, as well as other programmatic constraints, we recommend focusing on "counseling services" and not on counselor activities. The implication being that some services can be provided by persons who may not be "counselors."

B. Models of Counseling Service

Guidelines for school (K-12) counseling as developed by its major pro-

fessional organization, the American Personnel and Guidance Association,[1] have generally called for three broad areas of service - counseling, consultation and coordination. Briefly, counseling implies both individual and group contacts with students covering academic, vocational and personal concerns. Consultation involves work with school and community personnel and with "significant others" (typically parents) to enhance student learning experiences. Coordination refers to identifying and integrating school and community resources in the educational experience of the student. While these guidelines have been modified to some extent, they still, by and large, guide the actual practice of most school counselors. At the present time the guidance functions for counselors in Maryland as articulated by the MSDE[2] emphasize assisting students (K-12) with: (1) personal/academic growth; (2) future planning and decision making; and (3) social interaction.

A recent and perhaps germane statement of the role and function of post-secondary counseling[3] outlines five broad functions:

A. Work with students: orientation; individual group counseling relative to educational, career and personal-social concerns; and testing.

B. Consulting with faculty and administration to identify and articulate student needs for curriculum and program planning.

C. Research and evaluation of counseling services, follow-up of graduates and former students (drop-outs).

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[1]ASCA, Statement of Policy, APGA, 1964.

[2]Plan for Improving Guidance Services in Maryland, Maryland State Department of Education, 1979.

[3]The School Counselor, May, 1974, 21, (5), 367.

D. Personal and professional growth of counselors by updating skills and participating in professional associations.

E. Program articulation to community and civic groups; developing contacts with counseling services in other educational and community agencies.

Still another source of ideas for counseling services comes from NAPCAE.[1] In a somewhat confusing and poorly written document, one can "tease out" the following recommended services: individual counseling; group discussions; appraisal; and staff development.

After conducting a needs assessment, the Indiana Department of Education concluded that counselors could be of greatest benefit to ABE students, by providing consultation service to teachers on how to respond to student concerns and problems.[2]

Additional examination of other materials on this subject,[3, 4, 5] reveals that the most clearly articulated statement of counseling services for adult students is that provided by the California State Department of Education.[6] The scope of services include: initial interviewing

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[1] V. Malone, and M. A. Diller, The Guidance Function and Counseling Roles in Adult Education Programs, NAPCAE, 1978.

[2] J. D. Miller, An Indiana Assessment: Counseling Needs of Adults in ABE Indiana Department of Public Instruction, 1980.

[3] S. Grubowski Educational Counseling of Adults, ERIC Reports #114583.

[4] P. Perrone Counseling Needs of Adult Students ERIC Reports #136044.

[5] L. Porter, Adults have special counseling needs, Adult Leadership 1970, 18 (9), 275-277.

[6] Guidance Services in Adult Education Programs: A Leadership Approach ERIC Reports #177431.

and program orientation; competency assessment; educational program planning; group sessions; career planning; referral to community service and resources; and student advocacy. In addition, the California program clearly recognizes a broad definition of "counseling" personnel which includes, in addition to counselors, administrators, classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, peer counselors and clerical staff.

More closely related to our study are the statements of counseling services which we found in two local programs and which are our first two nominations for "existing exemplary practices" (E.E.P.) in Maryland.

In Howard County the counselor's articulated goals included:

1. Counseling students with educational, vocational and personal concerns.
2. Community outreach for support service development.
3. Planning and implementing an "ABE Career Fair."
4. Maintaining pertinent records.
5. Providing in-service for teachers.

In Prince George's County the articulated counseling program includes service in four major areas: personal living, career development, testing and program evaluation.

Thus far, we have been describing examples of existing programs and practices. Before leaving this topic it seems prudent to peek at the future. A most intriguing study which is futurist in its emphasis is one in which 1,280 administrators, teachers and counselors were asked to project appropriate directions for school guidance programs.[1] This study

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[1] R. L. Gibson, Future directions for School guidance programs, a study by the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges, Viewpoints, January 1978, 54, (1).

suggests that counselors during the close of this century will be spending greater portions of their time doing career guidance and that they will serve as consultants to teachers and other educators, and as community resource coordinators. In their work with students they will rely more on group activities (rather than individual) and will emphasize occupational and educational planning, including job placement. Finally counselors will be responsible for student follow-up data and program evaluation.

C. Summary and Suggested Model of Counseling Services

We hope it is apparent at this point that there is no simple "universal" model for counseling services for ABE programs! In fact the array of ideas and information presented may be somewhat overwhelming. To help us begin to evolve a reasonable program of services we suggest adopting a student's frame of reference. That is, as a student in an ABE program what kinds of services would be most useful?

To further refine our inquiry we might pose the question in terms of various phases of student contact with the program. We can think of three major phases:

(1) Entrance or re-entrance to the program;

(2) Participation and retention in the program; and

(3) Exit from the program either before or after the achievement of desired goals.

In the findings and recommendations of this report we will specify some of the component services from which students might benefit during each of these phases of contact with the ABE program.

For example during entrance to the program students will need help in self-assessment, goal setting and an understanding of how the program functions. Later on, help with career planning may be needed. Provisions for "graduates" and drop-outs will also be examined.

These services that we will describe are by no means exhaustive. However, our review of the literature, as well as the current status of services in Maryland, suggests that this array represents what is accepted as reasonably good practice as well as what is achieveable under existing conditions. Hopefully, our descriptions of current activities as well as our recommendations for future steps will help to clarify these suggestions.

In addition to identifying the services which are pertinent to students in ABE programs our task is also to clarify how those are being provided and to what extent they should be expanded, modified or eliminated.

III. PROCEDURES OF THIS STUDY

The first goal of this study was to gather information on the current status of counseling services provided for ABE students in Maryland. The second goal was to assess the need for future services for those students. The last goal was to design a model for a 3-year development and implementation plan for use in providing counseling services in ABE programs in Maryland. The procedures used to accomplish these goals are described below.

A. Background Information

A review of research and literature that pertains to counseling services for adult students was conducted. Some of our findings of this review are presented in Section II of this report. This is a relatively new area of service in the counseling field and there is not yet a comprehensive body of literature in this field. In fact, the current study with its focus on ABE students is in many ways a pioneer study, and hopefully may serve as a model for other studies. Clearly, definitive research is not readily available and there are currently more questions than answers. In our recommendations we hope to address some of these issues.

We also reviewed a number of pertinent ABE program documents which were made available to us by members of the Adult and Community Education Branch of the MSDE. These included: 1979-80 Program Final Reports; 1980-81 Program Proposals; First Quarter Reports for 1980-81

and Program Monitoring Reports for the past several years.

B. On-Site Visits and Interviews

A major strategy of our information gathering procedures was to conduct on-site visits to ABE units in Maryland to gather general information on current practices in the delivery of counseling services in those programs. Each Local Educational Agency (L.E.A.) was contacted by an initial letter (see Appendix p. A-1) describing the counseling services survey and asking that a contact person for the L.E.A. be identified. When we received the name of this individual, a phone contact was made to arrange for an on-site visit and to answer any questions regarding the present study. Depending upon the information received from the contact person, arrangements for whom we would see during our visit were made. In several instances return visits were made to gather additional information from staff or students who were not available during the initial visit.

The following summarizes on-site visits made and numbers of persons who were interviewed regarding counseling services in local ABE programs.

Region I

County	ABE Contact Person
Allegany	John Frank
Carroll	Larry Norris
Frederick	Ann Marshall
Howard	Mary Ann Corley
Montgomery	D. E. Richard
Washington	H. Ewbank

In Region I we interviewed:

6 ABE Coordinators, 2 Counselors, 2 Recruiter/Advisers, 30 Teachers and 10 Students.

Region II

County	ABE Contact Person
Calvert	Ann Mychalus
Charles	William McCall
Prince George's	Bill Roy

In Region II we interviewed:

3 ABE Cordinators, 3 Counselors and 8 Teachers.

Region III

County	ABE Contact Person
Baltimore City	Delores Hobbs
Anne Arundel	Charles Skipper
Baltimore County	Bert Whitt
Harford County	Lynn Weller

In region III we interviewed:

3 ABE Coordinators, 4 Counselors, 1 Recruiter/Adviser, 3 Teachers and 12 Students.

Region IV

County	ABE Contact Person
Caroline/Kent	Kathy Lins
Cecil	Stan Weissman
Dorchester	Gary MacNamara
Queen Anne's	Lynn McIntyre
Somerset	Conal Turner

Region IV continued

County	ABE Contact Person
Talbot	Lee Welier
Wicomico	Charlotte Hayman

In Region IV we interviewed 7 ABE Coordinators. In addition, we also talked with personnel from "Project Talent Search" at Salisbury State College to assess their involvement with ABE students in this area.

In addition to visits to the L.E.A.s described above, we also visited the Multi-Service Community Centers in Anne Arundel and Queen Anne's Counties and interviewed personnel there who provide counseling services to the adult community.

Correctional Institutions

A visit was also made to the Maryland Correctional Training Center at Hagerstown, where we interviewed:

1 Counselor, 3 Teachers and 6 Students (inmates).

Summary of Site Visits

In summary, we conducted interviews about counseling services in local Maryland ABE programs with:

19 ABE Coordinators	44 Teachers
13 Counselors, Recruiters or Advisers	28 Students

The structure for our interviews with coordinators was based on the topics outlined in the A.B.E. Counseling Information Survey Form (Appendix p. B-1). We encouraged each coordinator to tell us the "story" of his or her program as it related to counseling, and then used our top-

ical outline to fill in gaps.

The information gathered during these on-site visits was summarized according to the categories listed on the Information Survey Form. These included: general background information on the size and scope of the program; documentation and counseling program materials; descriptions in writing or orally of the scope of current counseling services; adjunctive staff services; community and other services; and projected program improvements. The results of these interviews have been incorporated as a part of the narrative discussion of our findings.

Our discussions with teachers, and counselors were conducted both in groups and individually. Mainly we focused on their roles in helping students, the problems students brought to them, and what kinds of help they needed to be more responsive to student concerns.

In our talks with students we asked about problems they were encountering, where they went for assistance and what additional help was needed. This information was used to develop the survey questionnaires described below.

As will become clearer in our section on findings, it would be an understatement to say that we found an amazing hetereogenity in terms of the depth and breadth of services being provided in local units. The quantity and quality of service seemed to bear little relationship to:

1. Size of student population.
2. Whether or not a "counselor" is available.
3. Knowledgeability of personnel about potential counseling services.

The idiosyncratic nature of each local program made it extremely difficult to draw comparisons of any meaningful sort. Despite this

difficulty, we saw that in a number of units some of the components of an exemplary counseling program are in place. A major task then was to identify these components as bench marks for future program planning and for evolving some minimal standards for counseling services. In other words, thus far, it seems that no single unit is providing comprehensive counseling services. But, many components exist, here and there within different ABE programs.

C. Survey Forms

In order to expand upon information collected by on-site visits and interviews we distributed surveys to students, teachers, and counselors/recruiters/advisers in ABE programs. Copies of the surveys are found in the Appendix (pp. C 1-11).

1. Student Survey (Appendix pp. C 1-2)

This survey had two major parts. The first part asked students if they sought help with a number of difficulties while they were in attendance at A.B.E. programs and, if so, from whom they sought assistance. The items for this survey were gathered from student interviews, teachers, counselors, and other similar studies. The second part of the survey asked students to indicate whether or not a counselor was available in their program. If no counselor was available, students were asked to indicate how interested they might be in having counseling assistance with a number of concerns. Finally information on age, sex and length of time in ABE classes was collected. In general, we found no significant demographic differences in our returns, and therefore, have reported our findings for the total population. The exception to this was between our correctional and non-correctional populations, and

we have presented this information in separate tables. Student survey information can be found in the Appendices on Tables 3, 4, 12 and 13, (pp. D 1, 2, 10, 11).

2. Teacher Survey (Appendix pp. C 3-7)

As the longest of our surveys this had five parts. Part one listed the same concerns as those presented in the first section of the student survey and asked teachers to indicate how many students they assisted with each. Part II listed counseling strategies which teachers might like to learn more about as an indicator of potential in-service areas. The third part inquires of teachers what services they saw counselors performing if one was available to them. If no counselor was available, in part IV teachers could indicate how they might utilize the services of a counselor. The final part of the survey asked for demographics on length of service, counseling training and membership in professional services. Although we analyzed the teachers' responses according to regions and length of service, we found no significant differences between these groups. Therefore, the results as presented in Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, are for our total sample. (pp. D 3, 4, 5, 6,)

3. Counselor/Recruiter/Adviser Survey (Appendix pp. C 8-11)

Because of the few number of counselors currently employed in ABE programs, and since our interviews revealed that they were performing many of the same functions, we included recruiters and advisers as a part of our total sample. And indeed, when we analyzed our survey returns, except for background training, we found no significant differences to our inquiries among them.

This survey had three parts. The first part was identical to

that of the teacher survey, listing the same student concerns and asking for the numbers of students assisted with those concerns. The second part asked for a specification of frequency of engaging in actual counseling functions. The third section offered an array of topics for possible in-service training, and the last section included demographics on length of service, formal counseling training and membership in professional associations. Because of the small sample (N=35) we presented the findings as a total sample in Tables 9, 10, and 11 (pp. D 7, 8, 9).

D. Survey Distribution and Returns

The order of distribution was based on our decision to survey all counselors/recruiters/advisers whom we were able to identify across the state (N=35). (In our discussion of findings we use the term "counselor" for all three categories of respondents unless we specify differently.) Further, we sampled 40% of ABE teachers across the state and in correctional institutions and attempted to sample 10 students for each teacher surveyed.

The surveys were distributed to each of the four MSDE regions and to correctional institutions in the following manner:

TABLE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEYS BY REGION

Region	Counselors/Recruiters/Advisers	Teachers	Students
I	9	50	500
II	12	36	360
III	8	67	670
IV	5	27	270
Correctional Institutions	1	20	200
Totals:	35	200	2000

To achieve this wide scale distribution of the counseling surveys, we relied heavily on the cooperation of the ABE coordinators of 17 local units and the correctional institutions. Some completed surveys were received from each of the units. The percent of survey returns by regions (including the correctional institutions) and for the total population are presented in Table 2 (p. 18). These returns are about average for this type of survey data collection. For their diligence and cooperation in this task the local A.B.E. coordinators are to be commended.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RETURNS BY REGION AND STATE

Region	COUNSELORS/RECRUITERS ADVISERS		TEACHERS		STUDENTS	
	Number of Returns	%	Number of Returns	%	Number of Returns	%
I	8	88%	33	66%	226	45%
II	6	50%	29	81%	201	56%
III	8	100%	35	52%	274	41%
IV	5	100%	15	55%	105	39%
TOTALS	27		102		806	
Correctional Institutions	0	-	7	35%	42	21%
GRAND TOTALS	27	77%	119	59%	848	42%

IV. FINDINGS

A. Overview

In this section of the report the findings on the current status of counseling services in ABE programs in Maryland are presented. The format which we are using to present our findings is actually our first recommendation for this study. As we discussed in Section II (p. 9) we are proposing a three phase model of counseling services for A.B.E. programs. This model emerges from our review of the literature, our site visits and interviews, and our surveys. On the basis of these resources, we believe this model will be a useful one for local programs to utilize in planning for the future. Using data from both our on-site visits and the surveys we will describe the "state of the art" for each of the suggested counseling program components. The components are:

Phase I: Program Entrance Services

1. Introduction to the program
2. Registration and orientation
3. Initial Assessment of skills
4. Academic program planning, including self-appraisal and goal setting
5. Establishment of group support system

Phase II: Participation and Retention Services

1. Monitoring of student progress
2. Academic planning
3. Career development and planning

4. Assistance with personal concerns

5. Maintenance of group support system

Phase III: Exit Services

1. Reaching "drop-outs"

2. Follow-up of "graduates"

3. Referral to appropriate community services

Using the results of our on-site interviews and surveys, we will summarize the most prevalent practices that we found in local programs. We will also cite practices which seem worthy of further investigation, but which may be too new or too infrequent to be cited as prevalent. And finally, we will highlight as existing exemplary practices (E.E.P.) those activities and programs which we see as potential models of service delivery and which are currently on-going in local programs.

In addition to summarizing findings for each of the program components, we will also present information describing the current "providers" of counseling services. The interests expressed by current providers for upgrading their skills will be discussed as a part of the suggestions for future staff development plans.

The summary of responses to our surveys are found in Tables 3 - 13 in the Appendices on pages D 1-11. In our narrative discussion we will highlight those survey and on-site interview responses which are germane to each proposed component of counseling services.

B. Phase I: Program Entrance Services

1. Introduction to the Program

The idea that counseling services are a part of the Adult Basic

Education program can be communicated to students before they ever come to an ABE class. That is, advertising for the ABE program can include information about counseling as a significant service and also as a benefit of participation in the program.

With only a few exceptions we found that L.E.A.s who have counselors attached to their programs do not communicate this in their literature to the public. In fact coordinators often seemed surprised by our query, "Do you advertise counseling as a part of the program?" There were a few exceptions to this prevailing trend.

Baltimore City, with the only full-time counselor in the state, does mention that it has counseling services available day, evening, and Saturday in its "Directory of Adult and Community Education."

Baltimore County, which this year has two outreach counselors, has flyers announcing this fact.

Harford County, in its program literature, stresses "informal" counseling.

Prince George's County, advertises that counseling is available for students who enroll in A.B.E. classes.

Those L.E.A.s which do not have a "counselor" or outreach worker but which give some "counseling assistance" do no advertising of this aspect of their programs.

Our survey of students further supports the lack of dissemination of information about the availability of counseling. Although only 15% of students in our sample are in L.E.A.s without a counselor, 22% said there was no counselor available to them and 34% (!) said they didn't know whether there was one or not. Teachers seemed to be better

informed on this topic in that only 8% said they didn't know. However, 24% said there was no counselor, when our figures would indicate that only 15% of them should also respond that way.

It is clear that here is a need to improve this introductory aspect of counseling services. Students who know that counseling is available to them whether by direct service or through referral may find the ABE program has greater appeal than just the offering of basic skills training.

2. Registration and Orientation

Lasting impressions are made on students during registration and orientation to educational programs. In fact, the first contacts can often "make or break" a student's willingness to participate. Just how significant this is is highlighted in the California ABE program by their emphasis on training clerical staff who are often the first contact a student has with the program.[1]

From our surveys we found that 69% of counselors were involved in the orientation of students to the program (Table 10, p. D-8). Our interviews reveal that the manner in which this occurs varies greatly from unit to unit. A fairly common trend is for counselors to assist with intake registrations, sometimes in person, sometimes over the phone. Many counselors "make the rounds" of classes at the beginning of the semester to introduce themselves to students and describe their services. In Prince George's County counselors leave students with cards to be used in requesting an appointment for counseling. Baltimore City sends a Mobile Unit with the counselor on board out to various neighborhoods to recruit, register and orient students to the program. A similar idea,

[1] Guidance Services in Adult Education Programs: A Leadership Approach ERIC Reports #177431.

the Cable Car was used in Frederick County for one year. Lack of renewal funds for this unique program made it unfortunately short lived.

In several of the smaller units without a counselor, the ABE coordinator provides students with an orientation to the program.

We were not able to identify any orientation procedure that was common to several units. In other words each L.E.A. has its own idiosyncratic approach.

It is our contention that orientation to the program is probably the most significant time for reaching all students and that careful attention to this aspect of the program is needed.

E.E.P. One of the best articulated program orientations is provided by Harford County. New students receive a letter welcoming them to the program and giving them a "pat on the back" for taking this step. In the letter the recruiter/adviser also states what kinds of assistance are available to the student. After taking a diagnostic inventory, students participate in a counseling session where program goals are discussed and placement recommendations are made. In this process are several important components: a warm welcome; a statement of services provided; diagnosis of skills and counseling on goals and placement. We see this as a good beginning.

However, there is, in general, a need for more clearly articulated orientation procedures as a part of counseling services for ABE students.

3. Initial Assessment of Skills

As with most other aspects of the ABE program, our interviews revealed a tremendous diversity among L.E.A.s in the way in which they

managed student skill assessment. Most units used some commercial tests for this purpose, while a few relied on teacher-made instruments. Among the 19 units we visited, we found the following array of tests in use for initial student skill assessment: WRAT (3 Units); SORT (1 unit); GATES (2 units); SLOSSON (1 unit); TABE (5 units); Prince George's County Test (4 units) and Teacher-made tests (3 units)! Not only is this type of assessment highly diverse, but the manner in which is conducted is equally so. The majority of L.E.A.s expect teachers to perform this service. Indeed in our surveys 63% of counselors said (Table 10, p. D-8) that they "almost never" or "only occasionally" administered or interpreted academic tests, which further supports our findings that this counseling service is being provided by teachers. The perception that this approach seems to be satisfactory was gathered from our interviews and also from our surveys. However, 49% of teachers (Table 6, p. D-4) indicated that they would find some training in interpreting standardized tests "useful or very useful."

An exception to the prevailing trend regarding initial assessment was found in Montgomery County, where this year 6 "counselor assistants" were used on a limited basis to test students. The effectiveness of this approach has yet to be evaluated by that unit.

Overall, this seems to be one of the better developed areas of ABE programs. However, some attention might be given to a more uniform use of testing materials so as to enable progress toward some standard evaluation across the state. Likewise, some upgrading of teachers skills in understanding and interpreting standardized tests seems desirable.

4. Academic Program Planning, Including Self-Appraisal and Goal Setting

It is quite apparent that a significant problem for ABE students are their "unrealistic expectations of progress."[1] This theme is repeated frequently in the literature and was reiterated in our discussions with coordinators, counselors and teachers. Apparently, ABE students have difficulty with both accurate appraisals of their strengths and weaknesses and/or setting future goals.

Students also are concerned about this, in that 70% indicated that they would be interested or very interested in getting help with setting goals for themselves, and 71% indicated a desire for help with educational planning (Table 4, p. D-2). This need is quite evident even though both teachers and counselors indicated that they were indeed doing this with students. 78% of the counselors said that they were helping the majority of students they saw with educational information and planning and 80% felt they were most able to help students with this concern (Table 9, p. D-7). Teachers were less involved, in that 43% indicated they were helping students with current academic planning and only 38% were aiding students with future plans. Most revealing, however, is the fact that 69% of the teachers (Table 5, p. D-3) indicated that they were assisting very few or almost no students with setting realistic goals for themselves while 52% of counselors (Table 9, p. D-7) said the same thing.

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[1] P. A. Caldwell, Innovations in adult counseling, Adult Literacy and Basic Education, Spring 1978, 126-131.

What conclusions can we draw from these findings? Clearly there is a need expressed by students in this area, but neither teachers nor counselors, portray themselves as providing this service. That is, educators are able to dispense information to students, but when it comes to realistic goal setting, they are not doing as well. This is further supported by the fact that 84% of the counselors (Table 11, p. D-9) felt that it would be useful to acquire additional skills in the area of adult learner motivation. (Note: Only 11 of the 27 counselors in our sample have a master's degree, and only two have any background in adult psychology. Most were trained as nigh school counselors). 71% of our teachers (Table 6, p. D-4) said that they, too, would like to learn how to help students set realistic goals for themselves.

This is obviously an area which is greatly in need of attention and we will have some recommendations to make later on.

5. Establishment of Group Support Systems

One can think of the ABE student who begins a course of study as someone who is trying to overcome a "bad habit." In this instance the habit is poor academic performance. Changing poor habits is an exceedingly difficult task. There are a number of reasons for this. One is, that the desired change of habit is often achievable only by working on long-term goals, but the short-term efforts which lead to this desired end, can be impossible to maintain. For example, a person wants to lose 25 pounds (long-term goal) which requires a change in daily habits. It is difficult to remember that eating smaller portions (short-term efforts) are leading to that goal. Particularly when, after an initial drop of several pounds, the losses drop to 2-3

pounds a week. The ABE students is confronted with a similar dilemma. Assuming passing the G.E.D. is a desirable long-term goal, he or she may, after an initial burst of enthusiasm and success have to cope with smaller and smaller short-term increments of skill development while maintaining significant efforts to achieve.

The evidence is very clear from a number of sources that these kinds of difficult changes in behavior can be greatly facilitated when individuals can come together in groups to share their concerns and their progress.

The benefits to be derived from sharing with others who are either "going through it" or "have been through it," are exceedingly well documented.[1] Such groups can be led by trained counselors (group counseling) or by peers (self-help groups). In either approach, people who successfully modify undersirable habits repeatedly give credit for their success to their membership in such groups.

In our review of ABE programs we have found almost no evidence of either professionally led or peer run group counseling. Furthermore, in our discussions with ABE personnel, we were struck with how few individuals understood the potential benefits of such groups both for keeping students in the program and helping them move ahead. 78% of our counselors (Table 10, p. D-8) said that they "almost never or only occassionally" conducted counseling groups. Our assessment was that typically such groups were used for dispensing information and only very rarely as support systems. Even more revealing is that 44% said

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[1]G. Caplan and M. Killelea, Support Systems and Mutual Help, Grune and Stratton, 1976.

that it would be of little use to learn how to establish and run counseling groups, and 48% see little use in learning how to train or use peer counselors (Table 11, p. D-9). 51% of the teachers did not see much use in learning to use students as peer helpers and only 53% were interested in having counselors develop group activities for students. Further, 92% of the teachers noted that counselors rarely did any group activities.

It seems evident that this is an area which needs to be addressed, beginning perhaps with educating ABE staff members as to the possibilities and benefits of the use of student support groups and then by initiating appropriate support groups for students.

C. Phase II: Participation and Retention Services

1. Monitoring Student Progress

In most educational settings the monitoring of student progress is a counseling function. Keeping records of grades, test scores and other indicators of progress are components of a counseling service. These student progress records can be used to make needed program changes. Such information can also provide the data for local norms which can be used to aid students in assessing themselves and in setting realistic goals. For example, in high schools local norms can help students know that X% of students with similar grades were accepted into certain postsecondary training programs. In fact, local norms when contrasted with national ones are seen by counselors as often more pertinent and appropriate.

Our findings in this area reveal that almost all L.E.A.s depend on teachers to monitor student progress. The logistics of most programs as well as personnel limitations seem to make this the most pragmatic approach. On a short-term basis we would agree. However, this tends to reduce the possibility of any centralized collection of student progress records (such as might be found in a "guidance" office) and the concommitant potential for developing local norms. As noted, local norms can then be used to aid students in assessing themselves in perspective vis-a-vis other students. Thus, by knowing that X% of students who score Y on the WRAT took Z number of months to progress to a given point, we could help a student better anticipate his/her own rate of progress thereby, reducing frustration and

improving realistic goal setting, which has previously been identified as a significant student need.

If the prospects for this type of mechanism at the local level are minimal they are virtually impossible statewide. Given the lack of standardization of appraisal, normative data will be difficult to develop.

Careful attention needs to be given to this issue if we are to become better able to assist students with setting realistic goals.

2. Academic Planning

Assuming that some academic planning has occurred with students during their introduction and entrance to the ABE program (see Phase I, 4, p. 21), what is required during this phase is a re-evaluation of skills, goals and academic plans. Typically, as students begin to see some progress, or a lack of it, the need for this re-evaluation counseling service surfaces.

As noted, presently 31% of our student sample seek out the teacher for academic information and 52% for G.E.D. planning, whereas only 11% use the counselor for planning and 5% for the G.E.D. (Table 3, p. D-1). Clearly under current conditions the teacher is seen by students as the primary resource for this kind of planning. Interestingly only 43% of the teachers (Table 5, p. D-3) indicated that they were assisting many students with this need, while 78% of our counselors (Table 9, p. D-7) saw themselves as providing this service. It may well be that while counselors are doing this, they are reaching relatively few numbers of students, and teachers may be equally unaware of the extent to which they <u>are</u> providing this service! In either case there is some

inconsistency in perceptions on this matter.

Of students who indicated they had no contact with a counselor, 71% were interested in getting help with academic planning and 68% wanted help in learning how to study (Table 4, p. D-2). Only 30% of our teachers and 15% of the counselors said they were helping many students with problems in this area, and, in fact, we are not aware of any systematic attempts to provide study skills training.

Some ABE programs which are housed in community college settings may have access to the college's study skills labs, but information on how much ABE students use this resource is presently not available. We can only speculate on how responsive students might be to special study skills workshops or mini-courses in addition to whatever they may be getting in the regular curriculum.

Certainly strengthening this aspect of the programs would be worthy of further attention.

One means of addressing this need can be seen in the workshop on study skills offered at the 1980 Region II conference for ABE personnel. Training in how to teach study skills could be valuable for developing this component of counseling. Incidentally, we noted that half of the workshops offered at the Region II Conference were "counseling oriented," perhaps reflecting an increasing awareness and interest in this area.

3. Career Development and Planning

In our review of programs, we found that activities related to career development (like so many others) varied enormously from one L.E.A. to another, We might divide local programs into 3 broad

categories on this dimension. In the first category, which includes the majority of L.E.A.s, there is almost no formal or systematic attention to career planning in the local program. That is, no planned activities, no career interest testing, and relatively little attention to this in the curriculum.

In the second category are L.E.A.s with some new attempts in this area where the impact is still difficult to assess. In this group are L.E.A.s like Queen Anne, Dorchester, and Anne Arundel counties where the recent openings of Multi-Service Community Centers, in which career development is a major activity, should give ABE students access to new recources. Just how much ABE students will benefit from this program will need to be assessed. Also in this category are a number of ABE programs where students were either referred from or to CETA programs for career counseling. It was our impression that CETA filled this need for many ABE students. Given current uncertainties in the CETA program, the prospects for that as a resource are unclear.

In the third category are the few programs with existing exemplary practices in career development.

Howard County: A career fair for ABE students is planned and implemented by the counselor. Well attended by students (as we observed), the fair brings potential local employers together and provides students with direct and easy access to job information. It also heightens student awareness of new job possibilities. This county is also developing a Job Network to serve as a referral service for ABE students. Students who are interested may also take a

career test, Self-Directed Search (SDS)[1] and have it evaluated by the counselor. (Note: Out of 18 L.E.A.s we visited only 6 had available any type of career testing for students. The SDS was the most prevalent test in use, followed by the Job-O).[2]

Despite limited time and resourses, Howard County's coordinator and counselor were clearly providing these services to their students in a most commendable manner!

Prince George's County: The career development program offered by this L.E.A. is the most sophisticated in the state. As a part of their Adult Career Development Series counselors run Career Development Workshops for students which cover a range of topics including: self-awareness skills; values; decision-making; career awareness; and job seeking skills. An excellent packet of materials has been developed by the counselors to be used in the ABE workshops. These are by far the best developed of any program we observed. In addition, materials have been developed for students by the county on: How to Get a Job[3] which gives students tips on job seeking, interview behavior and completing application forms.

It is evident that leadership in this area has been demonstrated by these two local programs. There is a need to more widely disseminate information on the "what" and "how" to the other L.E.A.s

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[1] Self-Directed Search Consulting Psychologists Press, Palo Alto, California.

[2] Job-O 1977 CFKR, Career Materials, Belmont, California.

[3] Booklet prepared by Janet Welsh Hill, Consulting Counselor, Prince George's County, 1978.

who might wish to use these programs as models.

Interest in career planning is widespread. 67% of students surveyed indicated a strong interest in getting help with career planning, while an equal number wanted information on jobs. We are not advocating that ABE programs become employment agencies, but as in all educational programs, strengthening the bonds between career and academic education seems beneficial. Broadening the student's career interests and horizons has been seen as a powerful motivator for continuing education, and it would seem germane for the ABE programs to capitalize on this connection. In fact, we will recommend that more systematic attention to this program dimension be given a high priority.

In our survey, 52% of counselors stated that they were providing information about vocational abilities and employment opportunities to many students. With regard to specific career development activities 52% said they rarely did career testing, and 60% said they rarely did any job placement (Table 10, p. D-8). Interestingly 75% said they would be interested in acquiring skills in career program development strategies. Teacher's perceptions of this area were equally interesting. Only 17% indicated much contact with students around vocational abilities and 23% on employment opportunities. Of those who indicated a counselor was available, only 35% said the counselors have been frequently involved in career planning with students. When asked about the desirability of counselors helping to provide this service, 82% of teachers responded positively (Table 8, p. D-6).

Thus, students, teachers, and counselors all seem to see a need and a relevance for this service. Some good models are cur-

rently in operation in Maryland. Wider dissemination of information about them, and some staff development along these lines would seem to be in order.

4. Assistance with Personal Concerns

Our findings in this area are as definitive as those in the previous section, albeit in a different direction. Perhaps this can best be summed up in a quote from an ABE teacher who told us, "my students share many personal concerns with me. Mostly, I think, they expect me to listen, but not to get too involved." Our study seems to support this observation to a great extent. Very few students (Less than 8%) indicated that they sought any assistance from either teachers or counselors for help with such personal concerns as family, money, or health related problems. Further, only 25% expressed any real interest in having counselors assist them in these matters. From the student's perspective the ABE program is clearly not a place for gaining help with personal concerns. This finding is in keeping with other studies which indicate relatively little interest among students for help with personal concerns in conjunction with their educational experience. (A significant exception to this finding surfaced among our sample of ABE students in correctional institutions (N=42). Among these students the reverse was true, in that 83% expressed a strong interest in getting counseling for personal problems (Table 13, p. D-11). The difference in these two populations on this issue is so diverse that different strategies will be recommended for each).

In our survey of teachers, over 85% indicated that they provide help in these personal areas to only a few of their students.

Likewise 69% said they saw counselors infrequently assisting students with such concerns, and they were about evenly divided (50% for, 50% against) on how interested they were in having counselors involved with these concerns.

Further support for our findings in this area came from our counselor surveys where responses indicated that fewer than 25% of our counselors were helping many students with personal problems, despite the fact that 64% saw students fairly often for individual counseling (Table 10, p. D-8). In other words counselors in their numerous individual contacts with students were not primarily doing personal counseling.

What do ABE personnel do for students who have personal problems? They listen and, as best they can, try to refer the student to for appropriate resources. We will elaborate on the resource referral processes we found in a separate section later on, but by and large this is the prevailing practice.

What should ABE personnel be doing in this area? Essentially what they are doing with perhaps some slight modifications, which we will also discuss later on. For example, in Frederick County the coordinator distributes a set of guidelines for teachers to aid them in being responsive to students. We cite this as an exemplary practice which other programs may wish to emulate.

Both Howard and Prince George's Counties have developed mechanisms for helping teachers make better referrals. We see these as also existing exemplary practices and will elaborate on them in the section on referrals.

In conclusion we are supportive of the prevailing current practice of being sensitive to student personal concerns and finding appropriate (external) resources for dealing with them.

5. Maintenance of Group Support Systems

As we discussed in Phase I, 4, we see a strong need for better use of support groups for ABE students. If such groups are made available to students upon entrance to the program then it would be important to maintain them throughout the duration of the program. As we noted there were virtually no group counseling activities reported to us, either from survey or interview data. There is, however, some appreciation of how useful group techniques might be. 61% of teachers, (Table 6, p. D-4) indicated an interest in increasing their skills in group dynamics and 46% were interested in having counselors develop group activities for their classes. 56% of counselors were interested in improving skills in running counseling groups and 68% wanted to learn how to run workshops (Table 11, p. D-9). Incidentially 78% of counselors rarely do any group counseling at present. We see this as an underdeveloped aspect of counseling services and will make some specific recommendations for improving these services.

D. Phase III: Exit Services

Students leave the ABE programs in two different ways, either after successfully meeting their goals or prior to doing so. In either case counseling services are clearly needed at these termination points. In addition, students may be "referred out" of the program for a variety of services. We will examine current practices in all three of these areas.

1. Reaching "Drop-Outs"

Statistics are difficult to come by, but from everything that we could learn our "guesstimate" is that 40-50% of students who begin an ABE program "dropout" prior to reaching their initial goals. (We are aware of the debates over "appropriate" goals and whether students achieve their own, perhaps lesser goals or those of the program and also about the difficulty in how to count students who drop "in" and "out." Nevertheless, everyone agrees, dropout rates are high.)

By far the most prevalent current practice is to rely on the teacher to monitor and follow up on dropouts. We were impressed with just how diligent many teachers are in this regard. Most systems rely on phone calls and/or post cards ("We miss you") sent to the student by teachers. In some programs, the counselor or recruiter will be asked to follow-up on these initial efforts. 45% of counselors said they did this. Some even go so far as to make home visits. Sometimes the clerical staff will be involved. And in a few units, even the coordinator gets in on the act. Still retention is an on going problem. We will have some suggestions for counseling services in this area in our recommendations.

2. Follow-Up of "Graduates"

We have earlier stressed the importance of monitoring student progress (Phase II, 1) as students go through the program. Equally important is following the further progress of students who complete the program. Not only is this type of information valuable in this age of accountability and program evaluation, it can also provide the

resources for adding to counseling services. Program "alumni" can serve current enrollees as models and as resources. Recent graduates are powerful peer models who can share with current students their successes in the program and those achieved after its completion. Putting students in touch with alumni broadens their perspective on what they can anticipate for themselves. Successful graduates are the best reference for any program.

Some graduates might even be willing to provide some volunteer counseling for present students.

We are not aware of any strong, thorough, follow-up procedures in the programs we studied and see this as unfortunate. Clearly it could provide many benefits for an ABE program, and we will recommend that efforts along these lines be considered.

3. Referral to Appropriate Community Agencies

When an ABE student needs assistance which is not available in the local program how are these needs being met? Our overall impression is the ABE personnel are most sensitive to this issue and are to a great extent appropriately responsive.

Most of the coordinators indicated strong relationships with community service agencies with two-way referrals a common pattern. (Agencies refer students to the ABE program and the program refers its students for services).

CETA services were mentioned by a majority of the programs as providing counseling services. Similarly most units have close ties with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Departments of

Health and Mental Hygiene, and Family Service Agencies. In those L.E.A.s where Multi-Service Community Centers were in operation, these were also utilized as referral resources for students.

Several L.E.A.s shared with us some unique community services to which their students had access.

Allegany County under a special grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission has been able to provide home based programmed instruction for students who are unable to attend regular classes. The project involves home visits by an outreach worker who aids students with instructional progress. This separately funded project has enhanced services for ABE students.

Carroll County has good reciprocal referrals with a special outreach counseling program, S.T.A.Y. (Services to Alienated Youth) a comprehensive community program. This is just one of several community groups which works closely with the ABE program to share resources.

Washington County students can get assistance at one of five community counseling centers which operate during evening and Saturday hours at county high schools staffed by certified secondary counselors with special training. This unique program is also funded by the Appalachian Regional Development Act. Although this program is primarily geared to high school graduates, the use of well trained counselors in convenient locations during evening and Saturday hours, seems to be a viable model for meeting the needs of adult students, and warrants exploration by ABE programs.

The referral procedures used to get students to these community services varied greatly. Some programs rely entirely on their teachers

to "know the community" and make informal referrals. In some units the coordinator plays a significant role in the process.

67% of our counselor sample indicated that they were frequently performing this service for students (Table 10, p. D-8).

Several counties have developed directories which describe agencies and the services they provide for teachers and others to use.

Prince George's County has the most comprehensive referral directory for ABE personnel that we saw, and copies of it are available in each ABE center.

The importance of strong community ties is best illustrated in Howard County where the counselor regularly attends the County Association for Community Services meetings, thus giving high visibility for the ABE program and establishing personal ties with service agencies. We cite both Prince George's and Howard Counties for these E.E.P.s.

Although both counselor (76%) and teacher (85%) groups indicated a strong interest in getting help to develop better referral procedures, our overall impression is that many programs are already doing an adequate job in this particular area.

E. Staff and Staff Development

1. Counselors

Of the 24 L.E.A.s in Maryland, during 1980-81, 14 actually employed personnel called "counselors." The staffing patterns for these counselors however, varies a great deal. The majority work part time (6-8 hours per week) similar to the ABE teachers. Several programs have counselors employed between 10-20 hours each week. Baltimore City

is the only L.E.A. with a full-time (40 hours a week) counselor. (The correctional program also has one full-time academic counselor who services one facility). Half of the counselors in our survey have a master's degree and 1/3 of the others have had 3 or less formal courses in counseling. Half of our sample have been with the ABE program for more than 3 years.

Table 10, (p. D-8) summarizes the frequency of various activities engaged in by our sample. More than 50% of our counselors indicated that they frequently did the following:

- Individual counseling with students.
- Orientation for new students.
- Provide career information.
- Consult with teachers about students.
- Find appropriate referrals for students.

What 50% or more <u>are not doing</u> very often is perhaps equally interesting. They are not:

- Counseling students in groups.
- Administering or interpreting tests (career and academic).
- Doing job placement.
- Doing follow-up on dropouts.
- Developing curriculum materials.

In terms of counselor's interests in staff development, Table II (p. D-9) presents some interesting data. It appears that more than 50% of our sample are interested in <u>all</u> of the skills that we presented as

choices! And indeed these findings support what our interviews told us on a more informal basis. The counseling staff in ABE wants training. In addition, one counselor summed up the feelings of many by noting:

> "The biggest need I have is to learn what other ABE counselors are doing. Due to limitations of hours (8/week), I am reluctant to establish inter-county contacts involving transportation and meeting time for which I would not be compensated."

2. Teachers

Repeatedly, we have been told that teachers provide much of the individual counseling in ABE programs. Everyone seems to be mindful of this and to see it as a strength in the program. We agree, that given the limits of time, money, personnel it seems to be a feasible method. One teacher commented on our survey:

> "I feel a counselor, or a program coordinator, could perform many tasks for the students in the ABE program. However, as a teacher in the ABE, I want to know my students as individuals, and a "resource" person who may service all class sites would not be able to develop the necessary personal relationship with all students."

What is it that teachers are doing in their "counseling" with students? Table 5, (p. D-3) indicated that 30% or more of our teachers were helping many students with:

. Test anxiety

. Educational information requirements

. Study skills

More than 50% of the teachers were helping at least a few or more students with all of the items listed with the exceptions of "get-

ting along with classmates" and "financial difficulties." So it seems that most teachers are responding to a range of student concerns.

When asked about their training and needs, more than 50% of our teachers indicated an interest in learning more about all of the items in Table 6, (p. D-4) with the exception of:

. How to break the ice with students.

. How to interpret standardized tests.

. How to use students as peer helpers.

It is clear that ABE teachers are eager for the kinds of in-service which would enable them to provide better counseling assistance to their students. Only 3 teachers in our sample indicated that they had a master's degree in counseling and 30% have had 1-3 courses. It is obvious that the majority of teachers have had little training, and yet are aware of the value of such experiences. How to provide it, is a major question.

In-service efforts along these lines are at best meager. No L.E.A. has any systematic program in counseling training. Several have had sporadic "human relations" workshops. In Region II teachers recently had an opportunity to attend a number of "counseling oriented" workshops during their annual meeting. In-service might be offered through professional organizations, however, only 40% of teachers in our survey are members of a professional Adult Education Organization.

E.E.P. In Howard County the counselor distributes a Counseling Packet[1] to teachers which contains much useful information on coun-

[1]Prepared by Jeanne Grimsley, Counselor, Howard County, 1981.

seling services strategies, and referral resources.

We view both the Region II workshops and the Counseling Packet as possible models for other L.E.A.s, and Regions to follow.

3. Paraprofessionals, Volunteers and Peer Counselors

In recent years, as most educational systems have decreased funds allocated for professionally trained counselors, and as the needs for service have been maintained or increased, the utilization of less trained personnel has emerged as a reasonable alternative. The field of counseling has found ways of utilizing the services of "paraprofessionals" (counselors with less than a master's degree), volunteers, and peer counselors (often students who have been trained to perform specific tasks for fellow students). In our review of ABE programs we found little utilization of these resources in most programs.

Paraprofessionals: Half of the counselors in our sample do have a master's degree. The rest, including recruiters, advisers, "outreach technicians," etc., are technically, counseling paraprofessionals. Even taking all of these individuals into account, we are still talking about fewer than 20 paraprofessionals with counseling responsibilities, statewide. It would seem that other paraprofessionals could be utilized by local programs to provide certain specified tasks, e.g. orientation and registration of new students. The main difficulty we see with this is the lack of training provided for such personnel. In other settings, professional counselors are usually responsible for training paraprofessionals. But it is clear

that in ABE programs, counselors have not typically assumed this responsibility. One exception was in Montgomery County where the professional counselor trains and supervises aides who assist with initial assessment and placement of students. This may be a model that other programs could adopt.

Volunteers: As far as we could ascertain, Wicomico County has the only volunteer counselor in the state of Maryland! The coordinator arranged with the counselor education program at a nearby university to place a counselor intern in the ABE program. The intern has provided counseling for a number of students in that county.

Other sources of volunteers might be among retired counselors or even currently employed school counselors who are interested in acquiring some different experiences counseling with an adult population. Local school systems and counselor education programs around the state may be able to aid in locating potential volunteers.

Peer Counselors: There is presently no peer counseling in any ABE program in Maryland. It is interesting that a number of programs which take pride in their use of recent ABE graduates as aides and tutors, have not seen this same group as a resource for peer counseling. With some minimal training and supervision, graduates or more advanced students might serve in this capacity.

The only example for such a effort that we found was a peer program that enjoyed some success for one year (1976-77), in Baltimore City. Unfortunately, the program was neither continued by Baltimore, nor adopted by any other L.E.A. It appears that perhaps the time has come to re-examine that concept.

F. In-Service Needs and Interests

The results of our interviews and survey data collection regarding the interests of ABE personnel for counseling related in-service activities yielded the following results.

1. Teachers

As summarized in Table 6, (p. D-4), more than 50% of the teachers in our study expressed the belief that learning more about the following topics would be useful or very useful to them when assisting students:

- How to hear what a student is saying.
- How to respond appropriately to a student's concerns.
- How to help students set realistic goals. (71%)
- How to identify student concerns which are beyond your level of "expertise."
- How and when to refer students to appropriate resources. (80%)
- How to utilize group dynamics in the classroom.
- How to find "counseling related" curriculum materials. (70%)

In addition, 49% wanted help in how to interpret standardized tests and in how to use students as peer helpers. It seems quite evident that teachers are open and eager for counseling related in-service training. (Note: In our analysis of data we checked to see if there were significant differences in the responses to our inquiries among ABE personnel in any of the four regions. Our analysis did not reveal any real differences, hence our findings are presented on a statewide basis. In our recommendations we will suggest that in-service might be provided in either regional or statewide programs because of simi-

larities of interest and need.)

2. Counselors

Table 11 (p. D-9) summarizes our findings for counselors' expressed interests for in-service training. These needs are indeed significant in that 50% or more expressed significant interest in all of the topics listed in Table 11.

These include:

. Establishing and running counseling groups.

. Understanding adult learner motivation. (84%)

. New trends in counseling. (84%)

. Training and supervising paraprofessionals.

. Test selection, administration and integration.

. Family counseling.

. Developing community resources. (76%)

. How to consult with teachers. (72%)

. Career program development. (75%)

. Developing workshops.

(Note: Although all of the topics were rated useful, or very useful by 50% or more of the counselors, we have also noted those identified as such by 70% or more of our sample). Clearly counselors are asking for assistance in the performance of their tasks.

3. Program Coordinators

Our on-site interviews yielded some clear indications of interest among ABE coordinators for information about counseling vis-a-vis their programs. Those interests fall into four broad categories.

1. What kinds of services could and should be provided for students.
2. How to make better use of their present counseling personnel (if any).
3. How to develop strategies for utilizing other personnel in the delivery of services.
4. What role they should play in this process.

In general, coordinators were interested and open to exploring alternatives in all of these areas and seemed concerned about the constraints imposed by the limits of present and future resources. We share their concerns! Obviously these interests could be addressed via in-service activities.

4. Other Personnel

Since there are virtually no other personnel providing counseling services in ABE programs we can only speculate about in-service for them and will address this concern in our recommendations.

G. Summary of Findings

In this section of the report we have presented our findings as these relate to the current status of counseling services for ABE programs in Maryland.

Based upon: A review of the literature; on-site visits and interviews with the ABE staff and students; and a survey data collection, we proposed a model program of counseling services. This program was presented in three phases relating to Program Entrance, Retention, and Exit Services. Next, we presented our findings in relation to each of the proposed program components. Finally, we described the current

staffing of existing counseling services and identified needs for future staff development.

Emerging from this blend of a proposed model of counseling services and the current "state of the art" in Maryland are the conclusions and recommendations of our study.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Overview

In this final section of the report we present the conclusions and recommendations for the provision of counseling services for ABE programs in Maryland. We have divided the information in this section into three major parts. In the first part, are recommendations for the essential components of each phase of the model program presented earlier in this report and discussed in the Findings Section IV. For each component, we have proposed some standards of service delivery, and wherever possible, suggested one or more strategies for implementation. Included in the suggested strategies are recommendations for utilizing existing and alternative staffing patterns.

The second part of this section is devoted to recommendations related to staffing and staff development.

The third, and final part, addresses the role of the Adult and Community Education Branch (ACEB) of the MSDE over the next three years in the development of counseling services for Adult Basic Education Programs in Maryland.

B. A Model Program of ABE Counseling Services

Based on our findings we recommend that local ABE programs begin to build a program of counseling services which would address the needs of students as they enter, participate in, and leave the program. Our recommendations include minimal standards for service delivery. We recognize that many L.E.A.s in Maryland are providing some of these services

in varying degrees. Some indeed exceed the minimal standards recommended in each area. However, no program is providing all of the services and indeed some programs provide few or none. The model, then, provides a set of guidelines and each local program approximates the model to a greater or lesser extent. One of the tasks over the next several years will be to arrive at some consensus on how closely a given program "should" approximate the model. This we see as a major task for the ACEB of the MSDE and will discuss this in the final part of this section on the report.

1. Phase I: Program Entrance Services

A. Introduction to the Program

Our findings clearly indicate that local programs need to communicate to the general public, to students in their programs and to teachers about the availability of counseling services. Advertising in newspapers, brochures, and flyers should describe either the kinds of services offered directly by each program and/or the availability of such services via the program's referral network. Letting prospective students know that participation in the ABE program will put them in touch with an array of support services may provide an added incentive for enrolling. Students (and teachers) in the program also need to understand what is available and how to initiate contacts. Clerical personnel and/or volunteers should be informed about services, particularly if they are the ones responding to inquiries from the general public and initial student contacts. Responsibility for this component could be readily assumed by a volunteer, a paraprofessional worker.

B. Registration and Orientation

At a minimum, orientation to the program should provide stu-

dents with:

- A warm welcome to the program, including recognition of the significance of this step in the student's life.

- A description of the ABE program and the counseling services provided either directly or by referral. If a counselor is available this person should be introduced and a mechanism for making contact presented. (Counselors who sit and wait for students to come to them are anachronism. Counselors need to go to students on a regular basis and we see this as best accomplished via regular group contact. However, students should also be able to "make contact" in case of an emergency.)

- Students should also be given a clear understanding of what they can anticipate as an adult learner. By this we mean that students need to be "forewarned" about possible pitfalls, discouragement and "falling by the wayside." By helping studebts to put into context future difficulties, they may be better able to weather the rough spots without quitting the program. This part of the orientation might be well delivered by "peers" who are persisting in the program and are willing to share their experiences. Early exposure to peer models has been demonstrated to be significantly related to success in many behavior changing programs. ABE programs could benefit from this approach.

- A mechanism should be established for encouraging the "pre-exit interviews" (described in detail on p. 62) so that students see this as an integral expectation for participation in the program. These interviews could be done by teachers, counselors, volunteers, etc., so long as students do not "drop-out" without this important contact. Responsibility and coordination of this program component should be delegated to one staff member if no counselor is available.

C. Initial Assessment of Skills

With few exceptions, most programs rely on teachers to perform this service. Overall this seems to be a generally acceptable practice. We see no reason to alter this, however, a few procedural issues may be worthy of consideration.

First, 49% of teachers expressed interest in learning more about standardized testing. Given the widespread use of teachers in this area, we see this as an indication for some in-service activity. Particularly, teachers need to be able to interpret results for students

in a manner which is realistic, but non-threatening.

Second, the wide diversity in the type of tests used in L.E.A.s for assessment may be worthy of scrutiny. Wide diversity may be generally desirable, but in this instance it reduces the possibility of developing statewide normative data which could become extremely useful for program accountability. Further, such diversity also complicates regional and/or statewide in-service assistance in this area. While we do not see this as a high priority issue, it clearly deserves some consideration in future planning.

D. Academic Program Planning, Including Self-Appraisal and Goal Setting

The essence of this component of the counseling program might best be stated, "Tell it like it is." Everyone---students, teachers, counselors, coordinators---is concerned about helping students with realistic goal setting and planning. One might liken it to the task faced by the physician who must tell the accident victim that "You will get better, but you may never fully recover." No one wants to be in that position. However, it is clear that students who enter ABE programs are fighting significant odds and a "full recovery" may not be possible. We recognize that this is a sensitive area, and one in which ABE personnel clearly are asking for help.

Counselors, as well as teachers, want to better understand the adult learner. They also need training in how to communicate the facts in a reassuring and supportive way.

In-service training in adult motivation, and on how to effectively guide students in goal setting is a clear need for teachers

and counselors. Striking a balance between communicating the reality of the challenge students face, and encouraging possible achievements is probably the single most complex task for the ABE staff member.

It seems that this issue will have to be addressed repeatedly, if there is to be any progress made through various in-service programs. In-service activities in this area could be provided in statewide, regional or local programs - or all three. Attention to this need should be given priority.

E. Establishment of Group Support Systems

Our findings are very clear that there is presently almost no use made of a support group system for ABE students in local programs. We recommend careful consideration of the implementation of such groups as a major component in the delivery of counseling services. As explained in some detail in the Findings Section, there is clear evidence that support groups are highly significant in aiding individuals to achieve significant behavioral changes. In programs which employ counselors, this should become a primary task for the counselor, and in other programs other alternatives should be explored.

The purpose of a group support system is to provide students with a means for sharing common problems and concerns, and for aiding each other through group problem solving and resource sharing. There is no one way to provide this service. It might take many forms, some are suggested below.

- Counselors could regularly visit classes and lead group discussions.
- Informal "drop-in" discussion groups might be run in ABE centers before or after classes by counselors or trained peer or paraprofessional counselors.

- Teachers can be trained to use discussion groups during times regularly scheduled for this purpose.

- In-coming students might be assigned to on-going, student led (under counselor supervision) discussion groups as a regular expectation of participating in the program.

Obviously these four strategies represent different types of commitment to this principle and each would require different levels of resource commitment. However, it seems that at a minimum, local programs need to begin to explore the use of this approach in ways which makes sense for them. At the state level encouragement of this endeavor could be evidenced by funding of special projects, and by in-service training of teachers and counselors in the use of Support groups.

2. Phase II: Participation and Retention Services

A. Monitoring Student Progress

In the Findings Section we described the lack of a centralized student progress monitoring system in most programs. We also described how the development of local normative information could be used to assist students in self-assessment and goal setting (See p. 31 for a full discussion of this). In our view, the development of such information is clearly a part of the counseling service and should be adopted as a program component. A well-trained counselor is able to design and implement this service and, with some simple computer assistance, make the information readily accessible to teachers, who in turn, could assist students with assimilating this information as a part of their joint academic planning.

B. Academic Planning

The need for a re-evaluation of academic planning frequently arises after students are participating in the program. Faster or slower

progress, new job goals, and changes in personal circumstances are only a few of the precipators for further academic counseling. It seems that presently, both teachers and counselors are providing this service, although, as we discussed in our findings, there is some confusion all around as to just who is doing what to whom.

We recommend that the teacher be supported in providing this service as the first line of defense. The counselor (when available) should be used for more complicated concerns which would require longer and more complex procedures to treat.

For example, many students need training in study skills. Counselors would be responsible for developing workshops, mini-courses or other services in this area.

Test anxiety is another common student concern. There are specific counseling techniques that have been developed to reduce test anxiety, and counselors should be able to provide assistance to students facing this type of difficulty on an individual basis or by offering "test anxiety reduction groups."

Finally, counselors should be responsible for providing teachers with basic academic planning information in a manner which would make it easy to transfer on to students.

C. Career Development and Planning

As presented in the Findings Section students, teachers and counselors all agree on the need and relevance of this program component. As we discussed there are currently in operation two excellent career development models in local programs. Howard County with one counselor (part-time) and a medium-size program provides, career testing,

a career fair, and a job referral service. Prince George's County, with 6 part-time counselors is a large program with a full career development program, numerous resources and even some data evaluating its success!! We would recommend support for the dissemination of information about these two model programs by the MSDE to other units. The counselors responsible for these programs are knowledgeable and well-equipped to offer in-service in this area to other counselors who want to develop this part of their program. These "in-house" resources should be utilized to the fullest.

Some local programs may find a more viable alternative lies in tapping into other existing career programs. For example, areas served by the Multi-Service Community Centers (MSCC) may find it is more expedient to simply provide ABE students with access to these existing services rather than to develop their own programs. Other unique community career programs at the Community College level, the public high schools or special agencies - like CETA - may also be able to serve ABE students.

What needs to happen is the articulation of the desirability and availability of career development services, whether these are provided directly within the ABE program or through other resources in the community. The task for the ABE program is to permit students to participate in the career development process in some systematic way.

D. Assistance with Personal Concerns

At this point in time, it is apparent that ABE programs in Maryland have neither the resources nor the personnel to provide comprehensive personal counseling services for students in these programs.

Further, it is equally clear that by and large students do not expect help with personal problems as a result of their participation in the program. In keeping with this, we recommend support of the current prevailing practice of providing informal "counseling" and concerned interest in students and making referrals to external resources for more serious needs. The desire for personal counseling expressed by correctional inmates is a matter that may need to be addressed differently than our general recommendation suggests.

Some basic guidelines to teachers on how to listen to students, such as is available in Frederick County would be desirable, as would assistance in distinguishing severe personal difficulties and situations which require intensive or crisis intervention. In addition 80% of teachers have expressed an interest in learning how and where to refer students. This request should clearly be given priority for in-service programs for teachers.

E. Maintenance of Group Support Systems

Our earlier recommendation for the establishment of student support groups during the orientation phase of a student's program leads into the present one for the on-going maintenance of such groups. Our society is experiencing a proliferation of self-help and mutual support groups for everything from weight loss and alcoholism to single parenting and pre-retirement concerns. Research evidence continues to document the efficacy of this approach in the maintenance of significant life changes. Clearly the ABE student undergoes such a change by returning to the classroom, yet in ABE there are virtually no efforts to incorporate this mechanism as an integral part of the program. Once these groups are established - as discussed previously - certainly they should be maintained for students who continue in the program. We would recommend that the

establishment of student support groups to be given a high priority in the years ahead in anticipation that such an effort may make a critical difference in retaining students in the program. Obviously this will need to be carefully tested, but all indications are that such an effort could be most beneficial and special efforts along these lines should be encouraged by MSDE.

3. Phase III: Exit Services

A. Reaching "Drop Outs"

Generally this aspect of the counseling program is provided for quite adequately in most local programs. As noted in the Findings Section, most prevalent is teacher follow-up via phone or post card after a student misses two or three classes. In some programs the counselor may also follow-up and occasionally make a home visit.

We support the current practice and offer several additional suggestions.

This is one area where the services of a volunteer "counselor" would be ideal. This person could be responsible for initiating all follow-ups when the teacher is unable to do so. (Retired school counselors might be interested in this type of service and could be contacted through local school systems or the Maryland Personnel and Guidance Association).

As part of the orientation process we would also recommend that students be encouraged to contact an identified resource person before they decide to leave the program. Students should be told that often people drop-out when they might be aided to continue with just a little extra effort. By making a concerted effort to encourage "pre-exit interviews," programs may see a significant improvement in student retention. Again, since this is currently not practiced, it will need to be tested,

but similar practices in other settings seem to warrant support for this approach.

3. Follow-Up of "Graduates"

This is certainly one area that needs to be examined by local programs. As noted, there are virtually no systematic follow-up efforts currently in practice. The benefits of gathering information on graduates for enhancing program evaluation, and the potential use of alumni in a variety of "peer modeling" situations have been discussed in the Findings Section.

As a beginning, students who recently completed the program might be asked to return for orientation activities the following semester.

Information on how graduates are faring can also be used as an incentive for current students.

The possibilities in this area are numerous and virtually untapped. Support for programs efforts along these lines should also be given a high priority through special projects and other activities.

C. Referral to Appropriate Community Agencies

As described in the Findings Section, appropriate referrals to external agencies are presently an integral part of nearly all ABE programs. Good reciprocal relationships are clearly evident as well as an appreciation by ABE personnel of the significance of these resources.

Our major recommendation relates to better distribution of local referral information to teachers. The materials developed by Prince George's and Howard County counselors can certainly serve as models for this process should other local units wish to follow them.

Although it is too soon to assess the impact of the newly opened Multi-Service Community Centers, these have the potential to become significant resources for ABE programs. We recommend the development of close relationships between these centers and ABE programs as a significant adjunct to the counseling services.

D. Staff and Staff Development

In the previous section we have outlined the components of a model program of counseling services with recommendations and strategies for implementation of the components. A program is only a concept, however unless there are well qualified people available to implement the concepts. We stressed the idea of a "program of counseling services" which can be provided by an array of individuals, not just by a counselor. Therefore, in discussing staffing for counseling services, we include teachers, counselors, students, volunteers, and coordinators when making our recommendations and suggestions for personnel utilization and development.

1. Teachers. We have previously described how teachers provide many counseling services for students. Under present circumstances this situation is likely to continue. However, taking into account the lack of formal counseling training reported by our teacher sample, there is an obvious need for in-service activities along these lines. Using the teacher survey responses as a guide, the two most prevalent needs were: (1) how and where to refer students for appropriate assistance; and (2) helping students set realistic goals. The first is probably best handled as local in-service, given the range and varia-

bility of services in different locales. The second topic could be provided for a wider population through regional or statewide programs. The pervasive concern about this issue should make it a clear priority for staff development.

In addition, we recommend some in-service for teachers relative to developing group support systems among students. As noted in some programs, teachers may be the best resource for developing such groups and in that case they will need some training in this area.

A final word seems appropriate regarding ABE teachers. Over and over again, during the course of this project, we have been impressed by the dedication and caring shown by ABE teachers for their students. It is clear that the strength of the program rest with the teachers. For this reason, we see in-service activities which support their efforts as taking high priority for future planning.

2. Counselors. Our recommendations in this area are fairly strong, but we are clear that unless significant changes are made regarding expectations for counselors, it is unlikely that much of what we are recommending will occur. ABE counselors need to become "program developers" rather than "individual service providers." There are too few, employed for two few hours, serving too many people to be effective on a one-to-one basis. Unfortunately, we encountered a number of "Model-T" counselors. These are the kind who sit in an appointed place and wait for students to come to them. In our view, this is a waste of time, money and resources. Counselors should be expected to develop those components of the proposed program which are lacking in their units. Thus in one unit the counselor may devote energy to enhancing the career

development component, in a second unit the use of group support systems, and in a third the development of a referral and resource network. Counselors who are not prepared to work on program should not be hired or retained by ABE units with limited resources for such personnel. A combination of in-service training and more definitive expectations of counselor functions is clearly in order to upgrade their contributions to ABE programs.

3. Peer Counselors. Currently the use of students to provide counseling assistance is virtually non-existent in Maryland. We have indicated varying ways in which they could be used: For new student orientation, as group support leaders, and as peer models. By involving current and former students, counseling services could be greatly expanded, while at the same time providing enriching experiences for those who are helping. Again, there is clear precedent from other settings where this strategy has been successfully utilized.

4. Volunteers. In our review of counseling services, we noted that one ABE coordinator had resourcefully recruited a student counselor to provide counseling services for ABE students! We commended the coordinator and would suggest to others that counselor education programs across Maryland have many students who need to do internships as a part of their graduate training. Contact with these programs could produce an excellent reservoir of volunteer counselors who could work under the supervision of regularly employed counselors. (Counselor Education programs are located at: Salisbury, Bowie, Towson, and Frostburg State Colleges; The University of Maryland, College Park and Eastern Shore; Loyola; Western Maryland; and Johns Hopkins University). A second source of volunteers might be among retired school counselors who could be located through local school systems and also the Maryland Personnel

and Guidance Association.

A third pool of volunteers might be found among currently employed school counselors who are interested in working with an adult population. These three groups all comprise trained counselors.

Still another resource could be untrained personnel (para-professionals) who, under supervision of the regular counselor could learn to provide a specific service, i.e. follow-up of graduates.

All of these adjunctive personnel could become part of a growing staff of service providers for ABE programs.

5. ABE Coordinators. The task for coordinators in the delivery of counseling services is two-fold: (1) to be knowledgeable about the kind of program they wish to provide; and (2) to be able to develop the staff and resources to deliver it! In our interviews with coordinators, we found they were open to new ideas and alternatives, but often felt "stumped" by how to develop the resources to do so. In a time of diminishing resources, we share their concerns. A major first step, however, would appear to be that of articulating what seems reasonable and desirable in developing a program of services. With that in hand, locating the means of implementation may be less formidable. Hopefully, this study will permit that first step.

E. The Next Three Years

This final section of the project report on Counseling Services in ABE Programs in Maryland has presented an extensive array of recommendations and strategies for developing the components of local service programs and the personnel to provide those services. Given the

current status of most counseling programs, the proposed development is a rather comprehensive undertaking. The leadership for accomplishing this task rests with the Adult and Community Education Branch (ACEB) of the MSDE. The ACEB is presently engaged in outlining a set of goals for the next three years, and in concert with that broader task, the prospects for enhancing counseling services can also be considered within a three year time frame.

Following this frame of reference these recommendations are made to the ACEB of the MSDE with regard to their role in providing the leadership for counseling service for ABE programs in Maryland over the next three years.

First Year: By the end of the first year following acceptance of this project report it is recommended that the following activities be completed.

1. After consideration of the recommendations of this report regarding counseling program components and staffing, and appropriate revisions of its contents, it is suggested that these be adopted as proposed Guidelines for ABE Counseling Services in Maryland. (There are no such guidelines presently available in Maryland and their adoption would clearly be a first step in the development of a comprehensive approach to service delivery.)

2. Dissemination of the proposed Guidelines to L.E.A.s for self-study is seen as a second major goal for the first year. (The great diversity among local programs requires self-assessment with regard to how closely each approximates the suggested model of services.)

3. In-service for ABE coordinators should be provided to assist in the self-assessment and in setting goals and priorities for their programs. (As noted, most coordinators are interested in enhancing counseling services, but are lacking training in counseling. They also will need assistance in how to apply the proposed guidelines to their own programs. This education effort should be started in this first year and continued during the next two).

4. A Task Force for Counseling Services should be established to provide leadership and direction to future planning. (Such a group should include ABE counselors who are presently working as "program developers" so that they can share expertise with others. This task force might be

charged with developing in-service for teachers and counselors as well as developing priorities for special projects.)

5. Assistance should be provided to L.E.A.s in the development of project proposals which will enhance the range of services they can provide to students in their programs. (Such proposals should reflect self-assessment with regard to current services and the establishment of program priorities.)

Second Year: During the second year the following activities should be given priority by the ACEB.

1. Support, in the form of special projects, should be provided to L.E.A.s who are attempting to implement the counseling guidelines.

2. The Task Force on Counseling Services should be maintained to continue to assist with the planning of in-service and special projects.

3. In-service for ABE coordinators on counseling program development should be continued.

4. In-service for counselors and teachers should be provided on regional or a statewide basis as recommended by the Task Force on Counseling Services.

5. Assessment of the impact of special counseling projects with particular attention to student retention should be initiated in local programs with such projects.

Third Year: During this period the ACEB should continue to support: local projects; Task Force activities; and teacher/counselor in-service.

In addition, a major task for this time would be to evaluate the progress of local programs with regard to the implementation of the proposed Guidelines. Modification in the Guidelines should be made based on feedback and appraisal of local efforts.

At the conclusion of the third year, a final set of Guidelines for Counseling Services in ABE programs in Maryland should be adopted by the ACEB.

APPENDICES

Title	Page
A. Initial Contact Letter	A 1
B. A.B.E. Counseling Information Survey Form	B 1-3
C. Surveys Distributed to: Students,	C 1-2
Teachers,	C 3-7
Counselors/Recruiters/Advisers	C 8-11
D. Tables of Student Survey Responses,	D 1-2, 10-11
Teacher Responses	D 3-6
Counselor/Recruiter/Adviser Responses	D 7-9

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY • BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21218

EVENING COLLEGE and SUMMER SESSION
Adult Basic Education
Counseling Study

Telephone: (301) 338-8273

Sue Prosen, Ph.D.
Project Director

September 15, 1980

Dear

Recently you were sent a letter from Richard Deasy of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) announcing the beginning of a statewide study of counseling services in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in Maryland. This study, which is funded by the MSDE under provisions of the Adult Education Act, is being conducted by our office. During the coming months, we will be surveying all ABE programs in Maryland to assess the current status of counseling services available to students in those programs, and to develop a set of recommendations for the MSDE to use in planning future program and staff development activities in counseling in ABE programs.

Our study will be conducted in several phases involving some interviewing and surveying to collect pertinent information. The first step in the study is to ask each local ABE unit to identify a key contact person in the unit with whom we can work to develop the procedures for gathering relevant information. We hope to meet with each of these key persons in October to develop further plans.

Therefore, we would appreciate your notifying this office (a card is enclosed for your convenience) of the appropriate contact person in your unit for this task. Upon receipt of this information, we will contact this person and begin our work with your unit. We would be most appreciative if you could give us the name of your local contact person by September 30, 1980.

Should you have any questions regarding this study, please contact our office at your earliest convenience so that we can provide you with additional information.

We look forward to meeting with your local representative and are most appreciative of your interest and cooperation in this endeavor.

Very truly yours,

Sue Prosen, Ph.D.
Project Director

SP/ng

A.B.E. COUNSELING INFORMATION SURVEY FORM

Date: _____ County: _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

I. General Information

A. No. of Students Teachers Counselors/Recruiters/Advisers

B. Funding Sources

C. Documentation of Counseling Services

___ Program descriptions
___ Evaluation/research reports
___ Information pamphlets, brochures
___ Funding proposals
___ Special projects
___ Other

II. Scope of Current Counseling Services

A. Public Information Distribution on Counseling Services (e.g. samples of brochures, T.V., radio, announcements)

B. Registration procedures; Initial student contact and interviews

C. Orientation activities

--- to program

--- to counseling services, facilities

D. Student Assessment Procedures

--- Individual testing (types and frequency)

--- Group testing (" " ")

--- Informal assessment

E. Academic Program Planning Procedures

F. Monitoring of Student Progress

- Program retention rates

- Immediate follow-up procedures

- Long-term evaluation studies

G. Career and Vocational Planning Services

H. Job Information and Placement

I. Referral Services

J. Personnal Counseling Services

K. Counseling Curriculum Development

III. Adjunctive Counseling Staff Services

A. Administration

B. Teaching Staff

C. Paraprofessional/Volunteers

D. Peer Counselors

IV. Availability of Community and Other Counseling Resources

A. Community Agencies

___ DVR
___ Social Services
___ Health Agencies
___ CETA
___ Local Business and Industry
___ Other

B. Special Programs

1. Regional Efforts
2. Cooperative Arrangements

III. Needed Counseling Program Improvements

A. Student Recruitment Services

B. Student Retention Services

C. Staff Development

D. Evaluation and Research

C-1

ABE Student Survey

Many adults who return to school find that they need help with different kinds of problems. We would like to be able to better help students like yourself. You can help us to do this by answering the following questions.

Since you have been a student in this class, have you tried to find some help with any of the following problems? If you did look for help for any of these, then put an X under the person or persons you went to for help. You can put one or more X's for each.

	1 Teacher	2 Other students	3 Counselor	4 Other	5 Did not ask anyone for help.
1. Understanding your job skills.					
2. Information about jobs.					
3. Worried about taking tests.					
4. Information about school programs.					
5. Taking the G.E.D.					
6. Getting along with other classmates.					
7. Trouble studying.					
8. Family problems.					
9. Money problems.					
10. Getting to class.					
11. Health problems.					
12. Other? Please describe what the problem was.					

83

84

In this space circle the number of those problems for which you needed the most help while attending this class.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

C-2

Is there a Counselor available to you and other students in your class? Circle One

Yes No Don't know

If you circled No or Don't know, please answer the following:

How interested would you be in having a counselor help you with each of the following? Put an X in the box showing your interest.

	1 Not interested at all	2 Somewhat interested	3 Interested	4 Very interested
1. Planning for your education.				
2. Learning how to study.				
3. Setting goals for yourself.				
4. Understanding yourself.				
5. Getting information about jobs.				
6. Planning your career goals.				
7. Problems with your family.				
8. Other personal problems.				

85

86

Please answer the following:

male female
Circle one

___
Age

Have you been in an ABE class before this year?

No ___

Yes___ When?_____

ABE Teacher Survey

Section I

Circle the number which indicates how many students in your classes come to you for help with the following concerns.

1. Almost all
2. Many
3. A few
4. Almost none

	Almost all	Many	A few	Almost none
1. Information about their vocational abilities.	1	2	3	4
2. Information about employment opportunities.	1	2	3	4
3. Anxiety about taking tests.	1	2	3	4
4. Information about educational opportunities.	1	2	3	4
5. Information about educational advancement requirements.	1	2	3	4
6. Getting along with other classmates.	1	2	3	4
7. Trouble concentrating on studies.	1	2	3	4
8. Family difficulties.	1	2	3	4
9. Financial difficulties.	1	2	3	4
10. Transportation problems.	1	2	3	4
11. Health difficulties.	1	2	3	4
12. Setting realistic goals for themselves.	1	2	3	4
13. Other? (Please write in any other frequently occurring concerns).	1	2	3	4

In this space circle those concerns listed above with which you feel most able to assist students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

In this space circle those concerns listed above with which you feel least able to assist students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

Section II

In this section, mark the extent to which you feel that learning new skills related to each of the following would help you to better help students in your classes.

1. Not useful at all
2. Somewhat useful
3. Useful
4. Very useful

	Not useful at all	Somewhat useful	Useful	Very useful
1. How to "break the ice" with new students.	1	2	3	4
2. How to really "hear" what a student is saying.	1	2	3	4
3. How to respond appropriately to a student's concerns.	1	2	3	4
4. How to help students set realistic goals for themselves.	1	2	3	4
5. How to know when a student's difficulties are beyond your ability to help.	1	2	3	4
6. How to refer students whom you cannot help.	1	2	3	4
7. Where to refer students for appropriate assistance.	1	2	3	4
8. How to understand and use group dynamics in working with your class.	1	2	3	4
9. How to interpret standardized test information.	1	2	3	4
10. How to use students as peer helpers.	1	2	3	4
11. How to find appropriate curriculum materials which would help students better understand themselves.	1	2	3	4

Section III

Circle One

Is there a counselor available to the students in your classes? Yes No Don't know

If you circled Yes, please answer the following questions.
If you circled No, or Don't know, please go on to Section IV.

To what extent has the counselor assisted you with each of the following.

1. Almost never
2. Occasionally
3. Fairly often
4. Very often

	Almost never	Occasionally	Fairly often	Very often
1. Understanding and interpreting students test results.	1	2	3	4
2. Finding vocational information for students.	1	2	3	4
3. Developing group guidance activities for your class.	1	2	3	4
4. Understanding a student's personal problems.	1	2	3	4
5. Follow-up of students who stop coming to class.	1	2	3	4
6. Referring a student to some community based service.	1	2	3	4
7. Helping students deal with test anxiety.	1	2	3	4
8. Finding curriculum materials which help students to better understand themselves.	1	2	3	4
9. Aiding students with career planning.	1	2	3	4
10. Aiding students with educational planning.	1	2	3	4
11. Other, please identify.	1	2	3	4

Section IV

If there was a counselor available to you, how interested would you be in having the counselor assist you with each of the following.

1. Not interested at all
2. Somewhat interested
3. Interested
4. Very interested

	Not at all interested	Somewhat interested	Interested	Very interested
1. Understanding and interpreting students test results.	1	2	3	4
2. Finding vocational information for students.	1	2	3	4
3. Developing group guidance activities for your class.	1	2	3	4
4. Understanding a student's personal problems.	1	2	3	4
5. Follow-up of students who stop coming to class.	1	2	3	4
6. Referring a student to some community based service.	1	2	3	4
7. Helping students deal with test anxiety.	1	2	3	4
8. Finding curriculum materials which help students to better understand themselves.	1	2	3	4
9. Aiding students with career planning.	1	2	3	4
10. Aiding students with educational planning.	1	2	3	4
11. Other, please identify.	1	2	3	4

Section V

For each of the following, check the correct response.

1. How long have you been an ABE instructor?

___ first year, ___ 1 - 3 years, ___ 3 - 5 years, ___ more than 5 years.

2. Have you ever taken any formal courses in counseling?

___ none, ___ 1 - 3 courses, ___ 3 or more, ___ Have a master's degree in counseling.

3. Do you belong to a professional Adult Education organization?

MAPSCE

___ yes ___ no

MAAE

___ yes ___ no

Other?_____

Any comments or questions about this survey? If so, we would appreciate your sharing them with us in the space below. Thank you for your cooperation.

ABE Counselor/Recruiter/Adviser Survey

Section I

Circle the number which indicates how many ABE students you assist with the following concerns.

1. Almost all
2. Many
3. A few
4. Almost none

	Almost all	Many	A few	Almost none
1. Information about their vocational abilities.	1	2	3	4
2. Information about employment opportunities.	1	2	3	4
3. Anxiety about taking tests.	1	2	3	4
4. Information about educational opportunities.	1	2	3	4
5. Information about educational advancement requirements.	1	2	3	4
6. Not getting along with other classmates.	1	2	3	4
7. Trouble concentrating on studies.	1	2	3	4
8. Family difficulties.	1	2	3	4
9. Financial difficulties.	1	2	3	4
10. Transportation problems.	1	2	3	4
11. Health difficulties.	1	2	3	4
12. Setting realistic goals for themselves.	1	2	3	4
13. Other? (Please write in any other frequently occurring concerns).	1	2	3	4

In this space circle those concerns listed above with which you feel most able to assist students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

In this space circle those concerns listed above with which you feel least able to assist students.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

Section II

Please indicate how often you engage in each of the following counseling activities.

1. Almost never
2. Occasionally
3. Fairly often
4. Very often

	Almost never	Occasionally	Fairly often	Very often
1. Counseling individually with ABE students.	1	2	3	4
2. Counseling ABE students in groups.	1	2	3	4
3. Administering academic tests.	1	2	3	4
4. Interpreting academic tests.	1	2	3	4
5. Recruiting students for the ABE program.	1	2	3	4
6. Providing an orientation to the program for students.	1	2	3	4
7. Providing career development activities such as:				
a. Testing	1	2	3	4
b. Information	1	2	3	4
c. Job Placement	1	2	3	4
8. Consulting with teachers about students.	1	2	3	4
9. Supervising volunteers to assist students.	1	2	3	4
10. Supervising students as peer counselors.	1	2	3	4
11. Finding appropriate referral sources for students.	1	2	3	4
12. Following-up on students who stop attending classes.	1	2	3	4
13. Developing special counseling materials for student or teacher use.	1	2	3	4
14. Other? (Please describe any other functions which you regularly perform).	1	2	3	4

Section III

Indicate how useful you believe learning the following skills would be to you in your current position in the ABE program.

1. Not useful at all
2. Somewhat useful
3. Useful
4. Very Useful

	Not useful at all	Somewhat useful	Useful	Very useful
1. How to establish and run counseling groups.	1	2	3	4
2. Understanding learner motivation and how it relates to adult students.	1	2	3	4
3. New trends in individual counseling (e.g. goal setting, anxiety, management, contingency, contracting).	1	2	3	4
4. How to train and supervise paraprofessionals (e.g. volunteers, peer counselors).	1	2	3	4
5. Test selection, administration and interpretation.	1	2	3	4
6. Family counseling skills.	1	2	3	4
7. How to develop a network of community resources and referrals for students.	1	2	3	4
8. How to consult with teachers.	1	2	3	4
9. Career program development information and strategies.				
10. How to develop workshops for teachers or students on given topics or program activities.	1	2	3	4
11. Other? (Please describe any other skills area which you think would be useful to you).	1	2	3	4

Section IV

1. Please circle the title that correctly describes your current position in the ABE program.

   1. Counselor 2. Recruiter 3. Adviser Other_____
   please specify

2. How long have you held this position?

   ___ first year, ___ 1 - 3 years, ___ 3 - 5 years, ___ more than 5 years.

3. How many hours per week do you work?_____

4. How much formal counseling training have you had?

   ___ none, ___ 1 - 3 courses, ___ 3 or more courses, ___ Have a master's degree in counseling.

5. Do you belong to a professional Adult Education Organization?

   MAPSCE

   ___ yes ___ no

   MAAE

   ___ yes ___ no

   Other?_____

Any comments or questions about this survey? If so, we would appreciate your sharing them with us in the space below. Thank you for your cooperation.

TABLE 3

WHERE STUDENTS GET HELP

(N= 806)

	Teacher	Other Students	Counselor	Other	Did not ask anyone for help.
1. Understanding your job skills	14%	2%	8%	11%	64%
2. Information about jobs.	9	3	15	16	56
3. Worried about taking tests.	38	5	3	8	46
4. Information about school programs.	31	5	11	14	39
5. Taking the G.E.D.	52	6	5	9	28
6. Getting along with other classmates.	8	9	2	4	77
7. Trouble studying	27	3	2	13	54
8. Family problems	8	1	6	14	71
9. Money problems	5	2	4	14	75
10. Getting to class	11	7	4	11	67
11. Health problems	6	1	5	12	76

TABLE 4

WHAT STUDENTS WANT HELP WITH

(N= 806)

	1 Not interested at all	2 Somewhat interested	3 Interested	4 Very interested
1. Planning for your education.	15%	13%	26%	45%
2. Learning how to study.	18	14	29	38
3. Setting goals for yourself.	18	12	25	45
4. Understanding yourself.	31	14	24	31
5. Getting information about jobs.	23	11	19	47
6. Planning your career goals.	22	11	23	44
7. Problems with your family.	61	14	10	15
8. Other personal problems.	64	13	8	14

TABLE 5

PER CENT OF STUDENTS WHOM TEACHERS HELP

(N= 112)

	Almost all	Many	A few	Almost none
1. Information about their vocational abilities.	2%	15%	54%	29%
2. Information about employment opportunities.	3	21	45	32
3. Anxiety about taking tests.	37	28	20	15
4. Information about educational opportunities.	11	32	46	11
5. Information about educational advancement requirements.	9	28	46	16
6. Getting along with other classmates.	3	4	17	76
7. Trouble concentrating on studies.	9	21	51	20
8. Family difficulties.	4	11	41	44
9. Financial difficulties.	5	6	29	60
10. Transportation problems.	2	8	47	43
11. Health difficulties.	1	3	45	51
12. Setting realistic goals for themselves.	7	22	38	31

TABLE 6

PER CENT OF TEACHERS INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THESE COUNSELING STRATEGIES

(N= 112)

	Not useful at all	Somewhat useful	Useful	Very useful
1. How to "break the ice" with new students.	19%	44%	26%	11%
2. How to really "hear" what a student is saying.	10	30	37	23
3. How to respond appropriately to a student's concerns.	6	29	36	28
4. How to help students set realistic goals for themselves.	9	19	42	29
5. How to know when a student's difficulties are beyond your ability to help.	9	21	38	31
6. How to refer students whom you cannot help.	7	13	47	32
7. Where to refer students for appropriate assistance.	5	10	46	39
8. How to understand and use group dynamics in working with your class.	16	23	36	25
9. How to interpret standardized test information.	19	32	37	12
10. How to use students as peer helpers.	15	36	39	10
11. How to find appropriate curriculum materials which would help students better understand themselves.	7	22	32	38

TABLE 7

PER CENT OF TEACHERS WHO BELIEVE COUNSELORS OFFER THESE SERVICES[a]

(N= 112)

	Almost never	Occasionally	Fairly often	Very often
1. Understanding and interpreting students test results.	55%	15%	17%	12%
2. Finding vocational information for students.	26	39	23	12
3. Developing group guidance activities for your class.	78	14	5	3
4. Understanding a student's personal problems.	28	41	19	12
5. Follow-up of students who stop coming to class.	54	20	13	13
6. Referring a student to some community based service.	30	31	23	15
7. Helping students deal with test anxiety.	56	19	15	9
8. Finding curriculum materials which help students to better understand themselves.	56	24	9	11
9. Aiding students with career planning.	25	40	20	15
10. Aiding students with educational planning.	27	31	28	14

[a](Counselor is available to program)

TABLE 8

PER CENT OF TEACHERS WHO WOULD LIKE COUNSELOR TO PROVIDE SERVICES[a]

(N= 112)

	Not at all interested	Somewhat interested	Interested	Very interested
1. Understanding and interpreting students test results.	19%	34%	27%	20%
2. Finding vocational information for students.	3	13	45	39
3. Developing group guidance activities for your class.	20	33	25	22
4. Understanding a student's personal problems.	15	27	34	23
5. Follow-up of students who stop coming to class.	1	21	28	49
6. Referring a student to some community based service.	5	19	30	46
7. Helping students deal with test anxiety.	14	29	30	27
8. Finding curriculum materials which help students to better understand themselves.	10	26	33	31
9. Aiding students with career planning.	3	15	38	44
10. Aiding students with educational planning.	3	16	40	41

[a](Counselor is not currently available to program)

TABLE 9

PER CENT OF STUDENTS WHOM COUNSELORS/RECRUITERS/ADVISERS HELP WITH PROBLEMS

(N= 27)

	Almost all	Many	A few	Almost none
1. Information about their vocational abilities.	18%	33%	37%	11%
2. Information about employment opportunities.	18	33	37	11
3. Anxiety about taking tests.	18	33	33	15
4. Information about educational opportunities.	30	48	26	-
5. Information about educational advancement requirements.	27	26	44	7
6. Not getting along with other classmates.	-	11	22	67
7. Trouble concentrating on studies.	4	11	48	37
8. Family difficulties.	4	18	48	30
9. Financial difficulties.	7	18	37	37
10. Transportation problems.	-	22	56	22
11. Health difficulties.	-	4	48	48
12. Setting realistic goals for themselves.	15	33	48	4

TABLE 10

PER CENT OF COUNSELORS/RECRUITERS/ADVISERS ENGAGED IN SPECIFIC COUNSELING ACTIVITIES

(N= 27)

	Almost never	Occasionally	Fairly often	Very often
1. Counseling individually with ABE students.	4%	22%	37%	37%
2. Counseling ABE students in groups.	48	30	7	15
3. Administering academic tests.	52	11	26	11
4. Interpreting academic tests.	41	22	22	15
5. Recruiting students for the ABE program.	27	15	38	19
6. Providing an orientation to the program for students.	8	23	31	38
7. Providing career development activities such as:				
a. Testing	41	11	22	26
b. Information	24	20	28	28
c. Job Placement	40	20	24	16
8. Consulting with teachers about students.	8	27	46	19
9. Supervising volunteers to assist students.	85	7	4	4
10. Supervising students as peer counselors.	89	7	4	-
11. Finding appropriate referral sources for students.	15	18	30	37
12. Following-up on students who stop attending classes.	18	37	15	30
13. Developing special counseling materials for student or teacher use.	44	33	11	11

TABLE 11

PER CENT OF COUNSELORS INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THESE COUNSELING STRATEGIES

(N= 27)

	Not useful at all	Somewhat useful	Useful	Very useful
1. How to establish and run counseling groups.	20%	24%	28%	28%
2. Understanding learner motivation and how it relates to adult students.	4	12	40	44
3. New trends in individual counseling (e.g. goal setting, anxiety, management, contingency, contracting).	8	8	40	44
4. How to train and supervise paraprofessionals (e.g. volunteers, peer counselors).	24	24	40	12
5. Test selection, administration and interpretation.	8	24	40	28
6. Family counseling skills.	13	22	35	30
7. How to develop a network of community resources and referrals for students.	12	12	28	48
8. How to consult with teachers.	8	20	56	16
9. Career program development information and strategies.	19	6	31	44
10. How to develop workshops for teachers or students on given topics or program activities.	20	12	36	32

TABLE 12

WHERE STUDENTS IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS GET HELP

(N= 42)

	Teacher	Other students	Counselor	Other	Did not ask anyone for help.
1. Understanding your job skills.	19%	3%	11%	17%	50%
2. Information about jobs.	10	10	41	5	33
3. Worried about taking tests.	29	9	3	6	53
4. Information about school programs.	43	6	14	6	31
5. Taking the G.E.D.	34	3	13	13	38
6. Getting along with other classmates.	3	12	3	12	70
7. Trouble studying.	25	-	6	11	58
8. Family problems.	3	3	27	9	58
9. Money problems.	3	6	28	15	47
10. Getting to class.	9	12	6	9	65
11. Health problems.	6	3	12	33	45
12. Other? Please describe what the problem was.	-	6	-	13	81

TABLE 13

WHAT STUDENTS IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS WANT HELP WITH

(N= 42)

	Not interested at all	Somewhat interested	Interested	Very Interested
1. Planning for your education.	11%	3%	36%	50%
2. Learning how to study.	3	14	40	43
3. Setting goals for yourself.	-	3	28	69
4. Understanding yourself.	-	11	28	61
5. Getting information about jobs.	3	8	17	72
6. Planning your career goals.	-	10	32	58
7. Problems with your family.	14	-	17	69
8. Other personal problems.	11	6	19	64